

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08 MCT-02 /102 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5416

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 08262

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MARR, SP, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS ON INTERNAL POLITICAL
MATTERS AND ON THE TIMING OF THE NATO DEBATE AND THE
BEGINNING OF CONSIDERATION OF A NEW UNITED STATES-
SPANISH BILATERAL AGREEMENT

1. DURING A LUNCH THAT FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA HAD FOR
AMBASSADOR TODMAN ON JULY 17, OREJA TALKED AT SOME LENGTH
ABOUT INTERNAL POLITICAL MATTERS AND ALSO EXPRESSED
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HIS CURRENT VIEWS ON WHEN THE NATO DEBATE IN SPAIN AND
CONSIDERATION OF A FOLLOW-ON BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN MIGHT BEST BEGIN.

2. POLITICAL CALENDAR

OREJA PREDICTED, AS DO MOST OTHER SPANISH POLITICIANS

AND POLITICAL OBSERVERS, THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM WOULD OCCUR IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER -- HE SAID PROBABLY TOWARD THE END OF THAT MONTH. HE THEN EXPECTED THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS TO OCCUR IN JANUARY 1979. HE THOUGHT NATIONAL ELECTIONS WOULD NOT OCCUR FOR ANOTHER COUPLE OF YEARS. WITH THIS CALENDAR IN MIND, HE SAID THE NATO DEBATE WITHIN SPAIN SHOULD BEGIN SHORTLY AFTER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN EARLY 1979 AND THAT CONSIDERATION OF THE BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES TO FOLLOW ON AFTER THE 1981 TERMINATION DATE OF THE CURRENT TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION SHOULD BEGIN IN MID-1979.

3. NEW GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNING ARRANGEMENTS AFTER CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM

HAVING RULED OUT EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS, OREJA SAID HE EXPECTED THAT THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM, IN PART FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING SUFFICIENT PARTICIPATION BY OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS SO THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE A MAJORITY IN THE PARLIAMENT. HE IMPLIED THAT A STRONG EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO BRING IN SUFFICIENT CATALAN AND INDEPENDENT REPRESENTATION TO ACHIEVE A MAJORITY AND SAID THAT IT WAS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT THE PNV MIGHT JOIN THE GOVERNMENT IF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE

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ON AUTONOMY TURNED OUT SATISFACTORILY, SINCE THE PNV AGREED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON MOST NATIONAL ISSUES. OREJA ALSO SAID THAT AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM THERE NATURALLY WOULD BE LESS OF A CONSENSUS APPROACH TO DEALING WITH ISSUES OF GOVERNMENT, BUT HE AGREED IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO TRY TO MAINTAIN A CONSENSUS APPROACH WITH RESPECT TO THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM. AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE LLADO, WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE LUNCHEON, WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING A CONSENSUS ON THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM.

4. THE BASQUE COUNTRY

OREJA, WHO IS A BASQUE AND WHOSE WIFE IS ALSO A BASQUE, TALKED AT SOME LENGTH, ALTHOUGH NOT VERY CONCLUSIVELY, ABOUT THE BASQUE COUNTRY PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT THE CURRENT PROBLEMS OF TERRORISM, EXTREMISM AND SEPARATISM BY A SMALL BUT VERY ACTIVE GROUP IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY HAD BEEN GREATLY EXACERBATED BY THE CONSISTENT NEGATIVE POSITION THAT THE FRANCO REGIME HAD TAKEN TOWARD THE BASQUE PROVINCES. AT THE SAME TIME, THE BASQUE LEADERSHIP HAD TRADITIONALLY SUFFERED, AND STILL SUFFERED,

FROM AMBIGUITY OF POSITION AND LACK OF A STANDOUT STATESMAN. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE BASQUE ISSUE WAS DIFFICULT INDEED TO DEAL WITH. THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEM WAS AND WAS DOING ITS BEST. AMONG THE ACTIONS THAT IT CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE WOULD BE THE SHIFTING OF SOME POLICE POWERS TO THE BASQUES. FORTUNATELY, THE PSOE, WHICH HAD STRONG POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS FROM OTHER PARTS OF SPAIN, WAS PLAYING A POSITIVE ROLE.

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5. COMMENT: OREJA'S SCENARIO FOR AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM THAT WOULD HAVE THE GOVERNMENT ACHIEVING A MAJORITY COALITION WITH THE CATALANS AND PERHAPS SOME OTHERS AND ALSO OBTAINING AGREEMENT ON CONTINUANCE OF A CONSENSUS APPROACH ON THE ECONOMY AND PERHAPS ON SOME OTHER CENTRAL ISSUES WHILE PUTTING OFF NATIONAL

ELECTIONS MAY BE THE GOVERNMENT'S PREFERENCE AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, NO FINAL DECISIONS WILL BE MADE UNTIL AFTER THE REFERENDUM ACTUALLY OCCURS.

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6. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT WE HAVE HEARD OREJA SAY THAT THE DEBATE ON NATO SHOULD NOT COME UNTIL AFTER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. PREVIOUSLY HE HAS TALKED IN TERMS OF THE DEBATE OCCURRING AFTER THE REFERENDUM, WITHOUT REFERRING TO THE ELECTIONS. THE TIMING HE INDICATED IN THIS CONVERSATION SEEMS MORE LOGICAL TO US. TODMAN

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